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in dealing with other employees. It is clear that only by preservation of this right to the employer can the discipline and control be maintained upon which the successful conduct of industry depend.

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ECONOMICS IN THE BRITISH WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

THE second and third sections of the Constitution of the Workers' Educational Association of Great Britain and the Dominions (known as the W. E. A.) read as follows:

II. OBJECTS

Its objects shall be: (a) To stimulate and satisfy the demand of working men and women for education; and (b) Generally to assist the development of a national system of education which shall ensure to all children, adolescents, and adults such education as is essential for their complete development as individuals and as citizens.

III. METHODS

It shall, in its capacity as a coördinating federation of working class and educational interests, exercise the power necessary to fulfill its objects: (a) By arousing the interest of the workers in Higher Education, and by directing their attention to the facilities already existing. (b) By enquiring into the needs and desires of the workers in regard to Education generally, and by representing them to the Board of Education, Universities, Local Education Authorities, and Educational Institutions. (c) By providing, either in conjunction with the aforementioned bodies or otherwise, facilities for the study of subjects of interest to the workers for

which necessity exists. (d) By the publication of literature, and by such other means as from time to time may be considered expedient.

The work carried on under the W. E. A. falls roughly into two divisions. First, the University Tutorial Classes. These are classes, limited to about thirty, the members of which pledge themselves to attend for three consecutive years, and to perform required reading and essay work. Each of these classes is in charge of some member of the Staff of a large university, who is chosen by the Joint University Board, for the district in which the class is held. This Board is made up equally of representatives of the university and representatives of the working men's organizations. Secondly, there are several hundred one-year classes and study circles, many of which are conducted by former Tutorial Class students, and a large number of public lectures, conferences, and week-end schools. It is the teaching of Economics as developed in the University Tutorial Classes that is of main interest to readers of this Journal.

In the year 1918-19, there were 156 of these University Tutorial Classes in Great Britain. This year (1919-20) there are many more. Out of the 156 classes in 1918-19, 63 were classes in Economics, and Industrial or Social History. These University Tutorial Classes meet one night a week, for two hours in the town or locality in which the class lives. The instructor travels from the university each week. The classes are composed almost entirely of working men or women in the manual or clerical trades. There is a very small percentage of small tradesmen, civil servants and the like. The age of the students tends to average about thirty; but there are many over that age. All the students attend these classes after a full day's work, or before a full night's work in factories, mines, or offices. Practically all have had a number of years' experience with the industrial system in their capacity as workers; many are heads of families and so bring a householder's point of view; some have acquired through events or travel a familiarity with many different parts of the

industrial world. A condition of membership is a pledge to attend to the end a three years' continuous course. This condition is, naturally, a selective instrument in drawing into the classes those workers only who wish earnestly to learn; and they often show an earnestness approaching passion. This fact determines the attitude both of the class and of the instructor. Each Tutorial Class has its library, made up of the best modern standard books on the subject studied. In economics the books, with a few exceptions such as Marshall are the same as would be used in a similar course of study undertaken in a University. The library is in the care of the class secretary-librarian elected by the class. The students can draw all the books out for their private reading; and they are in fact drawn out and read. In addition, the W. E. A. sells to its members special cheap editions of some of the books most used.

Each weekly meeting of these classes is for two hours. There is some variation in the way this period of class-room work is used. The usual method is for the instructor to lecture for the first hour, and then hold a discussion in the second hour. At the end of the meeting the instructor assigns a subject for essay writing, which is frequently suggested in the course of discussion. He also returns any essays of the previous weeks which he may have, with critical comments written on them.

Since these classes have the same members for three years, and the number of cases in which members do not attend with great regularity to the end is small, the course of study is made progressive. In the arrangement of the three-year courses in economics, and also in the ground covered, there is considerable difference between different instructors. Most of the courses, however, approximate a common type, and have similar general characteristics.

This common type is arranged somewhat as follows. The first year is devoted to the study of the economic history of Great Britain (perhaps not in the Dominion classes). Use is made of the simplest and most concrete material available and satisfactory. This study is made with the aim of trac-

ing out the development of the present economic situation, and also the development of economic functions and relationships. Maps and charts are used to a considerable degree. The second year is devoted to further analysis of the political, geographical and physical basis of industrial structure, with special reference ordinarily to English industry. Here, too, maps and charts are used. The order of these two years may be reversed, or the material interspersed differently throughout the two years. On the whole, however, the first two years are spent in the study of the facts of economic life, past and present, of the political, physical and geographical conditions underlying industrial life, and in trying to analyze the development of present economic relationships and structure. The third year is then spent in an analysis of the operation of the present industrial organization, and in a study of the economic position of the population and the distribution of wealth. The lectures are kept by most instructors as simply expository as possible. Usually the instructors follow a syllabus distributed to the class. In the discussions which follow the lectures, the broader questions of theory and ethics which are involved in the study are likely to come to the front. And the subjects which are assigned for essay work are calculated often to set the students thinking about the theoretical aspects of the material they are studying.

This plan is conceived primarily to give the students the background of fact and general knowledge which they must have in order to interpret the reading they do and the economic events they observe. In the discussions the lecture material is brought into relation with the collective experience of the class in industrial life and indeed also with long personal memories. In any one class as many as ten industries are likely to be represented. I have heard it said that classes made up of workers drawn from a variety of industries are likely to be better than classes in which all the members work in the same industry. Furthermore, many of the students have had some experience in local administration, trade union or otherwise, and therefore have a sense of the character of organization and the problems involved, in all forms. In

these discussions, the students learn how to express an opinion, but — still more important — they learn to have their own opinions discussed and challenged. This class-room contest is a great stimulus to study. The class brings together those individuals in the ranks of working men who most need such comradeship of study and opinion. The progress of the classes in essay writing is often slow, for many possess only the most rudimentary powers of expression in writing. Essay writing often is experience in an altogether new medium of expression, and one which puts their thought to a new and more critical test.

It is said at times that the students are as a rule too old to perform much genuinely original work. This may be true. Many of them have had their outlook on economic life so definitely determined before they begin this study that it is very difficult to effect fundamental change, perhaps. None the less the course of study does lead them to a broader understanding of the industrial organization of which they are a part and a witness. Under these conditions the method followed — study and analysis of historical material, and of material descriptive of present industrial structure and function — is the most helpful. For the minds of the students respond rather to new perceptions and new material than to general theoretical argument. Careful descriptive study is the best solvent for dogma.

If it be asked what motive inspires most of the students, no single answer is possible. But beyond a doubt it is true that most of them are acting merely on the vague ideal that intellectual development is a necessary condition to satisfactory life and citizenship.

The cynical may at this point be asking, What "brand" of economics is taught? The question is really answered by the description of the method pursued. The energy of the instructing force is devoted to stimulating the students to think for themselves, and not to telling them what to think. Every effort is made to bring them in touch with the material, which must be known before useful thinking is possible. No effort is made to assert any one set of views. Quite a wide diver-

gence of opinion and viewpoint is represented among the instructors of the various classes. As is natural, however, the W. E. A. attracts to it on the whole those young instructors who are impressed with the vital need of vigorous thought among the working classes, and believe that working-class thought is necessary for a satisfactory industrial situation. Most of them look forward to the time when working men will have an effective share in the control of their industrial life. However, the organization throughout is devoted to the idea that progress both in educational and industrial matters is to be accomplished only by the cooperation of all classes of the community.

Its attitude of class coöperation has brought the organization in conflict with that section of the English labor movement which is pledged to the doctrine of class conflict. This section of opinion is represented by the Central Labor College in London, where the course of instruction is built up strictly on the basis of Marxian doctrine, and where for example it is a rule that all instructors must be drawn from the working classes. The general standpoint of the W. E. A. organization in the matter of doctrine is well expressed in a review of Marshall's *Industry and Trade*, which appeared in the December, 1919, number of the *Highway*, the monthly journal of the W. E. A. "Since 1891 (the date of Marshall's *Principles*, 1st edition) the swing towards large scale production and standardization has been accelerated, and the scale of business organization has grown even more rapidly. Two other factors have, however, appeared in the field. One of these is the growing demand on the part of the workers for opportunities of self-realization and their revolt against conditions of industry which tend to rob them of their personality; and the other is the dawning conception that economic activity should not be primarily as a means of personal profit, but as a form of social service. These three, the economic efficiency of large-scale organization, the spiritual revolt of labor, and the claim of society to be abundantly supplied with the goods and services it requires, have each incontrovertible claims, and the great problem of constructive economics is to find an equation for them."

The effect of the W. E. A. work on the instructors, and on the universities from which they come, is second in value only to the value of the work to the students. The instructors in the main are the younger members of the staffs of the larger universities. Oxford and Cambridge sometimes elect Fellows for this work in particular. Usually the instructor sees something of many of the members of his class in their homes, as well as in the class room. He cannot perform the instruction without getting an understanding of the industrial and home life of his working-class students. Furthermore, he benefits in his work from the knowledge of the students of the particular industries they are engaged in. There is, in short, an exchange of knowledge and experience. The instructor is helped to get a knowledge of great sections of the industrial organization, particularly of the mysteries of production. He has exceptional opportunity for getting light on industrial relations and of observing the operations of the trade unions. He gets a knowledge of the policy and the administration of working-class movements generally.

The influence of the W. E. A. extends, however, beyond the particular instructor. The Tutorial Classes have become a link between the universities and the working classes, who heretofore have not had any relation to the universities. For example, the University Joint Board arranges for summer schools to be held on university premises. These are usually fortnightly courses of study, to attend which the students can get leave or vacation. Such departments as the Economics Department genuinely feel the stimulus of this new function. They are not only kept in touch with the industrial world, but they are in constant communication with those sections of it that they have had no bond with heretofore. This is the source of such a conception of a university as is set forth in the final report of the Adult Education Committee. There the university is pictured as the great instrument for communication of thought between all sections of the community; a communication vital for the success of an industrial democracy.

HERBERT FEIS.